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PROGRESS REPORT NO. 5

Copy #3  
75-142576

This progress report will be very brief, in view of the recent visits by the Washington project personnel, who are completely up-to-date on all aspects of the operation here.

The airplane was completed on schedule and shipped to the test base on July 25th. It was necessary to land the C-124 transport on the runway, which held up very well, no damage being caused by this lightweight landing of the large aircraft. Both the loading and unloading of the bird in the C-124 was accomplished readily within two hours, and taxi tests on the bird were started about July 28th.

On August 4th, four days in advance of contract flight date, the aircraft made two flights. At 9:03 A. M. August 8th, the airplane made its official first flight, climbing to 32,000 feet. All indications are that the flight characteristics are excellent. Landing characteristics are similar to a B-47, except for much slower speeds, and the operation of the outboard pogosticks is completely satisfactory. Many landings have been made without these units installed. A number of landings have been made in which the tip has not touched the ground until the last 20 feet of the landing roll was reached.

Approximately a dozen flights have been made on the bird, including flights to altitudes as high as 52,000 feet. The general handling characteristics of the aircraft are excellent and no oscillations have been noted about any axis. Stall characteristics are very good, with stalling speeds similar to the C-47 aircraft. Landing chase operation is conducted with the Bonanza chase plane. Speeds within 10 knots of the indicated design speeds have been reached and the critical Mach number approached within 14 mph. Gust control operation is good, but no very rough air flying has been done to date. The airplane empty weight was 10 pounds under the specification value, but the addition of extra brakes will essentially make it about that amount over.

Only minor mechanical problems have been encountered to date, such as sticking of the tail landing gear in the up position, which was recently corrected; freezing of the aileron tab units at high altitude; and poor engine starting. Substitution of Breeze spark plugs instead of the original Champion type by Pratt and Whitney has apparently solved the ground starting problem with the special fuel involved. Practically all flying has been done at heavy weight and close to the most rearward cg position. It is expected that altitudes of about 60,000 feet should be reached in about another week. Engine operation to date has been excellent.

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Training of the first ground crew was started Thursday, August 18th. A problem of obtaining security clearances fast enough may hinder this program.

The second airplane will be shipped to the ranch on Sept. 12th. It is quite apparent that all phases of the basic airplane schedule are being met at this facility. The fuselage for the sixth airplane is in the fuselage jig.

Problems of communication are being reviewed with the COMO group. Operation of the T-33 to test electronic package #1 has progressed well and a long range flight is expected during the week of August 22nd.

A financial report is appended, as well as photographs of the bird.

*Kelly*

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